



Running a meeting – a guide for Chairs

How to run a meeting

Within a Branch there are several different types of meeting that may be required. Some are informal, others are more formal such as an annual general meeting (AGM).

A good meeting will ensure everyone has the information they require, understands the outcomes, and knows what they need to contribute to achieve these.

Any meeting will need someone to be in charge or 'chair' it and another person to write down the minutes (the written record of a meeting). The minutes should give an overview of the structure of the meeting, starting with a list of those present, a list of the various issues discussed, and any responses/decisions that are made.

Informal meetings can be very useful with members encouraged to be more relaxed and engaged in open discussion. However, they still require some management/chairing to ensure constructive outcomes. You might hold an informal meeting to:

- discuss new ideas (Streams and Divisions are a recent focus)
- gather opinions and solve problems
- ensure everyone is still feeling enthusiastic about the Branch
- brainstorm ideas for events and training.

Tips to running a good meeting

- Establish the purpose and desired outcomes of the meeting
- Distribute an agenda prior to the meeting, unless it's an informal meeting
- Check that everyone understands the topics to be discussed
- Ensure everyone listens to each other carefully
- Ensure only one person speaks at a time
- Encourage everyone to be objective and keep discussion focused on the topic
- Examine each option individually and objectively in order to reach a conclusion
- Be very cautious with regard to General Business – a "political" agenda item is likely to cause issues when it is raised with no prior warning, with only the mover and his/her supports aware of the desired outcome. The general guide for a "complicated item" is for the person to be asked to submit a paper for consideration at the next meeting.

Formal meetings such as the AGM are usually a reporting meeting for the Branch. This means that your Branches aims, activities and finances are reported on at this meeting. They are usually held annually and open to anyone directly involved with the Branch. It is also when key roles like the chairperson are decided upon.

The Branches chair, manager/secretary and treasurer usually prepare the AGM agenda and distribute to all members prior to the meeting. Your Branches chairperson should run the meeting ensuring adherence to the agenda.